

VZCZCXRO5704  
RR RUEHPA RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHNK #0730 3491124  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 141124Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7929  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0390  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0312  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0366  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0699  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0807  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0432

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 000730

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/14/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: ABDALLAHI'S CHIEF OF STAFF DOUBTS RELEASE  
COMMITMENT -- FOCUS NOW ON AFRICAN UNION PSC

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins

¶1. (C) Charge met December 13 with President Abdallahi's Chief of Staff Mohamed Kaber Ould Hammoudi at Ould Hammoudi's request. Ould Hammoudi said the President had asked him to pass on his disappointment with the AU-led Brussels meeting on the 12th even though he was not surprised by the results. Ould Hammoudi said the Abdallahi camp had heard nothing from the regime about an upcoming "unconditional release" of President Abdallahi as promised by General Aziz. The assumption was that Aziz had made the comment to the AU-led delegation to put off action at the meeting on the 12th and the AU's meeting for the following week. While fully expecting there will be no change in Abdallahi's house arrest in Lemden, Ould Hammoudi said he assumed that if Abdallahi is allowed to come back to his home in Nouakchott, he will be prevented for holding political meetings or rallies. Nonetheless, the FNDD's communications strategy group is working up a contingency plan to take advantage of any increased liberties to allow Abdallahi to address Mauritians directly both in Nouakchott and the provinces.

¶2. (C) Charge reviewed with Ould Hammoudi the take away from the Lemden meeting of the 9th that President Abdallahi was committed to a long-term strategy that neither sought nor was open to any mediation attempts between the President and General Aziz. Ould Hammoudi reiterated that President Abdallahi excluded any negotiation with General Aziz beyond a discussion of Aziz' departure. Ould Hammoudi acknowledged this was a long term strategy based on the assumption that the combination of international condemnation and sanctions, internal resistance, depleted financial resources, and Aziz' own misgovernance will lead to Aziz' departure sooner than later. Ould Hammoudi made clear that the President assumes Aziz will be displaced by a counter-coup" and told Charge, "at this point, any new coup will be a good one." Ould Hammoudi argued that any new coup will seek to get Mauritania back into the good graces of the international community which necessarily starts with bringing the President back. Charge noted there were obvious risks in this strategy. If one accepts that Aziz is planting the seeds for a counter-coup by undermining political, military and business opponents, it is just as possible that a counter-coup will be motivated by tribal or ethnic divisions as by any sense of the need to return to democracy.

¶3. (C) Ould Hammoudi noted that the President's current attention is on the African Union's PSC. The President will be writing all PSC member-states (and calling as he is able)

to urge the PSC to move forward on sanctions and, most importantly, to refer Mauritania to the Security Council. Charge noted we had also been in contact with PSC members and found generally strong support for firm action on Mauritania.

14. (C) Ould Hammoudi noted that the constant difficulty for the anti-coup movement was financing. The President would be encouraging the African Union and other organizations to recognize him or his delegates for major summits which will continue to require funds. Comment: During the December 9 visit to Lemden, Charge confirmed with President Abdallahi that he did not/not want access to Mauritanian government accounts in the U.S. Federal Reserve system although he did want those accounts frozen. The President said he was reluctant to use public funds since it would open himself up to criticism.

HANKINS